

APPENDIX TO THE ASSET USER GUIDE

FREQUENTLY ASKED POLICY QUESTIONS ABOUT ASSET FIELDS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

August 2006

FREQUENTLY ASKED POLICY QUESTIONS ABOUT DATA ELEMENTS IN ASSET

General Questions

Question: This doesn't provide a lot of detail. Where can I find additional information about State policies on program definitions and requirements?

Answer: This is designed to answer ASSET questions which arise on a regular basis. It is not a substitute for the WIA policy updates that DWS publishes. It provides brief guidance on how to complete specific data elements within ASSET. If you need further detail about program policies, you can view individual policies at <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dwdwia/policy.htm>.

Question: If my question isn't answered here, what should I do?

Answer: Start with your ASSET User Group representative. DWS developed this FAQ in partnership with them. If your representative isn't able to answer the question, you can submit questions to your local program liaison.

Manage Customers

Question: What does "underemployed" mean?

Answer: For Youth, "underemployed" means an older youth (19 - 21) who has never held a full time job.

For Displaced Homemakers, "underemployed" means the individual is employed but is either:

- Working full time and has an earned income, which if annualized, would be equal to or below self-sufficiency; or
- Working part time and seeking full time work.

For WIA Title 1, "underemployed" should only be reported if it applies to an out-of-school youth or a displaced homemaker.

Question: If I report an individual as underemployed at participation, which performance measures will apply?

Answer: If you report an individual as "underemployed" at participation, that person will be considered employed when we compute the entered employment rates. Individuals who are employed at participation are not counted in the entered employment measures.

Manage Employment

Question: What is "NAICS" and why do we have to report this?

Answer: "NAICS" is the North American Industry Classification System, which replaced the old U.S. Standard Industrial Classification system (SIC). NAICS is a required data element under WIA Title 3. It is also an element for which data validation is required. It is in your best interest to report this information accurately for analyzing demand-driven occupations and preparing

performance measure proposals. It helps you answer the question: "What kind of jobs are participants getting and what industries are hiring people?"

Manage Assessment

Question: On the 1st Occupational/Educational Overview Tab, what information goes in the field labeled "Training Programs Not Completed"?

Answer: List those training programs the participant had not completed. This includes programs the participant has either failed to complete prior to entering the program or in which he/she is currently enrolled. There is a 500-character limit for this field, so try to be concise in listing the programs. If there isn't enough space to list all training activities, you can also use the space labeled "Educational Comments and Needs Summary".

Question: On the Supportive Services Tab, what does "Yes" or "No" mean when answering the questions "Needs child care?" or "Needs transportation?"

Answer: This is an ASSESSMENT. If the participant does not have child care but needs it in order to participate in WIA programs, the answer is "Yes". If the participant is receiving child care assistance when the assessment is performed, the answer to the question is "No". Use the Child Care Arrangements field to describe the assistance the participant already receives. If more assistance is needed beyond what the participant already receives, answer "Yes" and provide further information in the Arrangements text field.

For "Needs transportation", "Yes" means the participant needs access to transportation to participate in the program. "No" means the participant does not need transportation to participate.

Question: On the Supportive Services Tab, under the Legal Section, what should we report in the text box labeled "List financial resources and needs"?

Answer: Report any financial resources and needs the participant may have. This is not meant to be limited to resources and needs of a legal nature.

Question: On the Occupational/Educational Testing Results Tab, please define the Test Code options and provide examples of each.

Answer:

Aptitude: Aptitude tests are structured systematic ways of evaluating how people perform on tasks or react to different situations. They are characterized by standardized methods of administration and scoring with the results quantified and compared with how others have done at the same tests.

Examples of Aptitude Tests:

- Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE) - measures functional abilities of Adults.
- Basic English Skills Test (BEST) - measures adult ESL learners at the survival and pre-employment skills levels.

- Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) - measures adult literacy and basic skills.
- Work Keys - measures problem-solving, communication and team work skills.

Achievements: Achievement tests measure acquired knowledge and skills, usually as the result of instruction. These tests measure how well you know a subject. They are often used as a prerequisite to entering a formal training program or to prove mastery of specific subject material at the conclusion of a training program.

Examples of Achievement Tests:

- Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) - measures reading recognition, spelling, and arithmetic computation. There are two levels; level I is normed for children ages 5-0 to 11-11; level II is normed for children aged 12 through adults aged 64.
- Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) - measures an individual's scholastic attainment.

Career Development Inventories: Tools that help individuals with career choices, career changes, career planning, career development, job skills, job search, and choosing a college major or training program.

Examples of Career Development Inventories:

- Windmills - a comprehensive range of exercises and activities developed to help participants take control of their careers and manage them successfully. It covers all aspects from looking at skills to identifying and finding one's ideal job.
- Career Development Profiler (CDP) - tests and exercises which are used in career counseling programs at all levels from undergraduates through to senior managers.

Interests: These brief "tests" are designed to help participants narrow the focus of their career searches by identifying and clarifying interests, values, and aptitudes.

Examples of Interest Inventories:

- Birkman Career Style Summary: A short quiz that can help determine what career fields and jobs best match personal strengths.
- The Keirsey Temperament Sorter: Identifies one's personality type based on a theory of "psychological types." Provides information about how a participant may interact with his/her world.

Basic Math Skills: Tests that identify individual levels of competency in mathematics to identify further vocation training or education needs and tailor training programs to suit individual needs. In WIA, this means the individual is unable to compute or solve problems at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society - generally at or below the 8th grade level.

Examples of Basic Math Skills tests include:

- Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) - measures adult literacy and basic skills.
- Work Keys - measures problem-solving, communication and team work skills.

Other Education Assessment: Other tools that measure or evaluate individual abilities and training needs.

Proficiencies: These tests measure how well a person can perform a particular job. They are used to distinguish between what applicants say they can do and what they really can do.

Example of proficiency test:

- Typing Test
- Welding Test

Basic Reading Skills: Tests that identify individual levels of competency in reading, writing, listening and speaking English. In WIA, this means the individual is unable to read, write and speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family or in society - generally at or below the 8th grade level.

Manage Employability Plan

Question: Please define the skill types in the dropdown menu for Skills to Develop.

Answer: U.S. DOL TEGL 7-99 provides a very comprehensive definition of basic, occupational and work readiness skills.

Basic educational: These are "academic skills". Activities should result in a measurable increase in basic education skills including reading comprehension, math computation, writing, speaking, listening, problem solving, reasoning, and the capacity to use these skills.

Occupational: These are "practical skills". Primary occupational skills encompass the proficiency to perform actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate or advanced levels. Secondary occupational skills entail familiarity with and use of set-up procedures, safety measures, work-related terminology, record keeping and paperwork formats, tools, equipment and materials, and breakdown and clean-up routines.

Work readiness: These are "soft skills". Work readiness skills include world of work awareness, labor market knowledge, occupational information, values clarification and personal understanding, career planning and decision making, and job search techniques (resumes, interviews, applications, and follow-up letters). They also encompass survival/daily living skills such as using the phone, telling time, shopping, renting an apartment, opening a bank account, and using public transportation. They also include positive work habits, attitudes, and behaviors such as punctuality, regular attendance, presenting a neat appearance, getting along and working well with others, exhibiting good conduct, following instructions and completing tasks, accepting constructive criticism from supervisors and co-workers, showing initiative and reliability, and assuming the responsibilities involved in maintaining a job. This category also entails developing motivation and adaptability, obtaining effective coping and problem-solving skills, and acquiring an improved self image.

Other: This option should only be used if the goals set for the participant do not fall under any of the above categories. The use of "Other" should be the exception, not the rule.

Manage Programs

Question: On the General Program Summary tab, please define the Unemployment Compensation Programs Status. How do we know if they were or were not referred by WPRS?

Answer: "Eligible claimant referred by WPRS" means the participant is UI eligible and was referred by the Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services program (WPRS). There is no standardized way that referrals are handled. When in doubt, ask the participant who referred him or her to the program.

"Eligible claimant not referred by WPRS" means the participant is UI eligible, but was not referred by WPRS. When in doubt, ask the participant who referred him or her to the program.

"Exhaustee" means the participant has exhausted his or her UI benefits.

"Neither claimant nor exhaustee" means any individual who does not fit into any of the other three categories.

Question: On the Title 1 tab, do I have to keep updating the Pell Grant Recipient screen?

Answer: Per Federal reporting requirements, if the participant received a Pell Grant at any time during WIA participation, you must answer this question as "Yes". If the answer was "No" at registration, but the participant later received a Pell Grant, you should update this field to say "Yes". You do NOT have to change the status, once the answer has changed to "yes".

Question: Can you provide a link to the FPL/LLSIL tables?

Answer: This is done in CARES, and will likely be brought over as part of ASSET 3.0. For the time being, staff will have to refer to the table that accompanies the policy update when it is sent out each year.

Question: How could you ever answer that a participant is "Not low income"?

Answer: There is no requirement that adults be low income to be served under the WIA Title 1 Adult program. Some WDAs have established local policies, however, that require all adults to be low income. For Youth, 95% of youth must be low income. The WDA may serve a maximum of 5% non-low income youth if they are in one or more of the following categories: school dropout; basic skills deficient; one or more grade levels below the grade level appropriate to the individual's age; pregnant or parenting; disabled, including learning disabilities; homeless or runaway; offender; or face serious barriers to employment as identified by the local board.

Question: What is "cash public assistance"?

Answer: This requirement and definition are under review because state policy contradicts the federal eligibility requirements. The WIA law states that public assistance is a "Federal, state or local government cash payments for which eligibility is determined by a needs or income test". In-kind, non-cash support programs (e.g. National School Lunch Program, WIC, Medical Assistance, Medicaid and Medicare) do not meet this definition under WIA Chapter 101(25) or (37). The DWS published a policy update on February 27, 2002 that assigns a far broader definition to cash payments than we believe the law intended. At the present time, the interpretation as published in the DWS policy update may be used to define cash public assistance, but only if no other qualifying criteria are identified. If this policy changes, you will receive further direction in the form of a WIA Policy Update memorandum.

- If the source of the cash assistance is from a Federal program, such as TANF or FSET, report the assistance as "Federal".
- If the source of the cash assistance is from a State program, such as WIA or TAA, report the assistance as "State".
- If the source of the cash assistance is from a county or local program, such as General Assistance (see definitions below), report the assistance as "Local".
- If multiple sources at different levels are received, report which ever category accounts for the highest portion of the cash payments.

General Assistance: General assistance is a cash assistance program that is operated by county agencies in a number of Wisconsin counties. If your county does not provide general assistance to eligible individuals, do not report it.

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA): Welfare and medical assistance is provided to financially needy, recently arrived refugees and asylees who are ineligible for other programs.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI): This is a needs-based program for people whose Social Security benefit (either retirement or disability) is low.

Question: If a family receives food stamps, but the person we are working with is a full time student, we have been reporting that the participant is not eligible. Is this right?

Answer: This is not a food stamp eligibility question. The purpose of this field in ASSET is to report if the participant is receiving food stamps at the time of WIA registration. Answer "Yes" if the participant:

- Receives food stamps, or
- Is a member of a household receiving food stamps, or
- Received food stamps during the last 6 months prior to registration.

Question: We have people who are considered to be eligible for and receiving food stamp benefits from the county, but in fact, their disbursement amount is \$0. How should we answer the question about food stamps in ASSET?

Answer: You should answer "Yes" since the individual is a member of a household that is eligible for or receiving food stamps. You may want to follow up with the FSET worker to find out why the amount was a zero.

Question: If someone is on food stamps, do I need any additional information for income verification?

Answer: If the participant is a youth, receipt of food stamps automatically makes them eligible. The case manager must document this in the case file per the documentation guidance.

If the participant is an adult, the case manager should consult with WDB representatives to determine what the policy is, since low income is not an eligibility requirement for adults.

Question: Please define the following terms on the Manage Programs screens.

Answer:

Basic Literacy Skills Deficient: the individual computes or solves problems, reads, or speaks English at or below the 8th grade level (i.e. score of 8.9 or below) or is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job.

Disabled: An individual who has:

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the individual's major life activities;
- A record of such an impairment; or
- Been regarded as having such an impairment.

Face Serious Barriers: This is part of the 5% non-low income eligibility criteria (5% window). A locally defined condition or situation that acts to hinder or restrict an individual seeking education or employment.

Homeless/Runaway: An individual who:

- Lacks a fixed, regular, or adequate night time residence, or
- Has a primary night time residence that is:
 - A public or privately operated shelter for temporary accommodation,
 - An institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or
 - A public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Needs Additional Assistance (must meet local WDB definition): The individual needs assistance to complete an educational program or secure and retain employment. This the "6th eligibility criterion" referenced in Federal regulations and DWS program policy.

Offender: An adult or youth who is or has been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process, or who needs assistance to overcome barriers to employment resulting from a record or arrest or conviction.

One or More Grade Levels Behind: Usually applied to youth. An individual who tests academically below, or demonstrates competencies and proficiencies one or more grade levels below other individuals of the same age.

Pregnant or Parenting: An individual under age 22 who is pregnant, or a youth who is providing custodial care for one or more dependents under age 18.

School Dropout: A youth who is no longer attending any school. This includes youth who have been expelled and transient youth who are not enrolled. Dropout status is determined at registration.

Question: Please define what TANF programs are and provide a list.

Answer: The list of TANF programs is extensive and subject to change. If you are in doubt about the funding source for a program your participant is in, contact the W-2 case manager for further details.

Question: Please define the dropdown menu choices for "Meets WIA 'Out of School Youth' Criteria".

Answer: An out-of-school youth is an individual who is a school dropout; or is a high school graduate, or holds a GED/HSED, but is basic skills deficient, unemployed, or underemployed. If a youth meets this definition, select "Yes, meets criteria." If the youth does not meet this definition, select "No, does not meet criteria".

Question: What is the purpose of the Intake Status field near the bottom of the youth program details screen?

Answer: This is a service provider/case manager tracking status feature to assist you in determining if you have completed the intake process for a participant or not. Case managers have told us that they can't always get all required documentation at one time.

Question: Please explain the purpose of the Selective Service Indicator and define the responses.

Answer: Full details about Selective Service registration can be found in U.S. DOL TEGL 8-98. To summarize, every male citizen, and every other male residing in the United States must register with the Selective Service System (SSS) between their 18th and 26th birth dates. Each WDB is responsible for determining a participant's eligibility for WIA services and benefits on a case-by-case basis.

- Select "Yes" if male applicants are registered with the SSS.
- Select "No" if male applicants are over 26 years old; possess a "Status Information Letter" from the SSS stating they were required to register, but didn't and now cannot be registered because the law does not allow for registration after the age of 26; and applicants have supporting documentation to demonstrate why they failed to register with the SSS. Supporting documentation is defined in the TEGL and in the DWS Documentation Guide.

- Select "Not Required" if the applicant is a female, a male under the age of 17 or a male born before January 1, 1960.

Question: Under Staff Type, what does "Only for Vet Staff" mean?

Answer: In WIA Title 3, services to veterans are tracked by Staff Type: either LVER, DVOP or Transitioning Service Member (TSM). WIA Title 1 case managers should not use this field unless they are entering services or other participant data on behalf of a designated LVER, DVOP or TSM.

Manage Services

Question: How do I know if a service should be reported as "Self-Service and Informational Activities" or "Staff-Assisted Service"?

Answer:

Self-service occurs when participants serve themselves in accessing workforce investment system information and activities in either a physical location, such as a Job Center resource room or partner agency, or remotely via the use of electronic technologies.

Informational activities in a workforce investment setting may include both self-services and staff-assisted core services that are designed to inform and educate a participant about the labor market and enable a participant to identify his or her individual employment strengths, weaknesses, and the range of services appropriate for the individual. The exception is services that require significant staff involvement (see next question).

When a staff member provides a participant with readily available information that does not require an assessment by the staff member of the participant's skills, education or career objectives, the participant is a recipient of informational activities. This includes information such as labor market trends, the unemployment rate, information on businesses that are hiring or reducing their workforce, information on high-growth industries and occupations that are in demand.

A participant is also a recipient of informational activities when a staff member provides the participant with information and instructions on how to access the variety of other services available in the Job Center, including the tools in the resource room.

Question: What is "significant staff involvement"?

Answer: "Significant staff involvement" is any assistance provided by staff beyond informational activities, regardless of the length of time involved in providing such assistance. Significant staff involvement includes a staff member's assessment of a participant's skills, education, or career objectives in order to achieve any of the following:

- Assist participants in deciding on appropriate next steps in the search for employment, training, and related services, including job referral;
- Assist participants in assessing their personal barriers to employment; or
- Assist participants in accessing other related services necessary to enhance their employability and individual employment related needs.

Question: On the Training Services screen, where an ITA is established, what are we supposed to put where it says "course" and then "add course"?

Answer: This is an ITA tracking function. In the field labeled "Course", enter the name of the course(s) the participant is taking that are paid for by the ITA. Click on "Add course". A list of courses will appear just above the course field so that you can see, at a glance, what course the participant is taking. You can remove courses from this list by clicking the "Remove" button just to the left of the course name. This information is also linked to the participants employability plan and the ITA services screen. If you remove the service on the Training Services screen, it will also be removed from the EP and the ITA screens.

Question: What is the difference between Job Readiness Skills and Occupational Training?

Answer: *Job or work readiness skills* training provides participants with an awareness about the world of work and what it takes to be a part of it. For youth, this includes activities such as learning about the labor market, career planning, decision making, job search techniques and values clarification/personal understanding. It also encompasses "survival skills" such as using a phone, telling time, shopping, renting an apartment, opening a bank account, using public transportation, work habits, proper work "attitude" and behaviors such as punctuality, regular attendance, attire, getting along with others, following instructions and completing tasks.

Occupational skills training imparts specific instruction that enables an individual to perform actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate or advanced levels.

At the adult level these activities are less clearly defined. *Job readiness* training is instruction designed to improve an individual's employment competencies. It can include many of the activities listed for youth, and may also have an employment retention or advancement component attached to it, depending on the participant's individual service strategy. Conversely, *Occupational Skills* training is instruction that results in a specific level of certification, a diploma or a degree.

For example, successful completion of a computer office suite training program would be considered job readiness training, because it increases an individual's knowledge and skill in using a software package used by employers. Emergency medical technician training would be considered occupational skills training because it results in certification and licensure which is required to provide medical care and transport of the sick and injured in an ambulance.

Question: How is the "Completion Code" field supposed to be used?

Answer: This field was added to adult service screens to document the outcome of a particular service.

Will Never Start This Service: This means that although the case manager and participant discussed this service and added it to the employability plan or individual service strategy, the service was never begun and the participant has no intention of ever beginning the service.

Did Not Complete This Service: This means that the participant began the service, but did not complete it at the time the case manager closed the activity and entered an Actual Service End Date in ASSET. Do not use this code for participants who are currently participating in a service activity.

Completed This Service: This means that the participant began and completed the service. The case manager reports this code at the time the activity is closed and an Actual Service End Date is entered in ASSET.

Manage Follow Up

Question: Please define the types of credentials that can be attained.

Answer: *High School Diploma:* Self-explanatory.

GED or HSED: General Equivalency Diploma or High School Equivalency Diploma. Self-explanatory.

AA or AS Diploma/Degree: These are associate degrees or diplomas from post-secondary training institutions, including technical and community colleges. The program is usually two years in length and has fewer total course hours for completion than a 4-year baccalaureate degree program.

BA or BS Diploma/Degree: These are baccalaureate degrees or diplomas from post-secondary training institutions, including colleges and universities. The program is usually 4 years in length.

Occupational Skills License: A legally defined or recognized license or certificate that authorizes an individual who has met a minimum standard of proficiency to engage in specific types of work. To acquire such a license or certificate, an individual must pass a state- or industry-mandated licensure examination before the license can be issued. Examples include: Chauffeur's Driver License, Pharmacy Technician certificate or license, Emergency Medical Technician license, and Apprenticeship program completion certificates.

Skills Certificate: A training certificate or document that attests to the fact that an individual successfully completed a course of instruction in a particular field or topic of study. A certificate generally affirms that the participant met a minimum standard as defined for successful completion of the training program. Skills certificates enhance an individual's ability to secure employment, but are not necessarily required to qualify for employment.

Question: How do I report Older Youth employment on the Follow-Up Status screens?

Answer: Directly beneath the Youth Status reporting fields, you will find a field labeled "Employment Status: Entered Unsubsidized Employment". Select either "yes" or "no".

Question: Under Follow Up Status, Entered Employment Overview, if a customer did not receive training, can we just leave those screens blank, even though it's the overview page?

Answer: These are not required fields. If you leave them blank, the answer is assumed to be "No" for all questions on this tab. The first two questions are specifically related to participants who receive Training Services. They should not be answered if the participant did not receive Training Services. The question about Non-Traditional Occupations (NTO) corresponds to the questions about NTO on the Manage Programs Title 1 screens. We want to see if participants who expressed an interest in NTO entered NTO-related jobs post-exit. So, if the participant expressed an interest in NTO at registration, you should answer this question if you know the participant's outcome.

Question: On the Follow Up Services screen, what is the provider ID?

Answer: It is the locally created ID number for your follow up service provider, if a number is assigned. If providers have names, but not numbers, then leave the field blank. Enter the provider's name in the field labeled "Provider".